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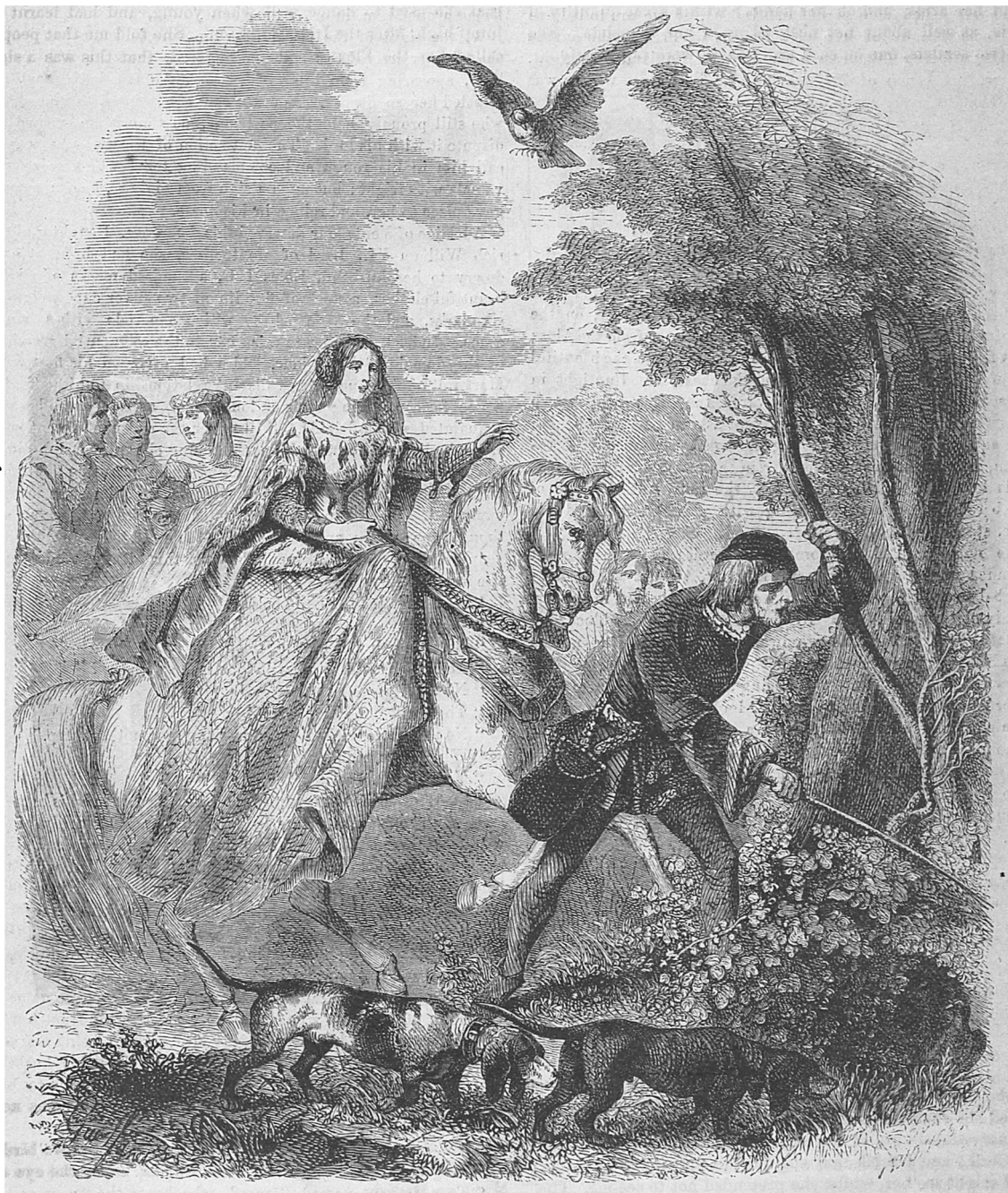
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STORY OF A FALCON.

THE extensive plains of Quercy affect those who see them for the first time with a strange sensation. As far as the eye can reach, nothing is to be seen but a mass of small, hard, grayish stones, which on all sides encumber the surface of the soil. The only traces of animate nature consist in a few stunted oaks, and a narrow field, enclosed by walls formed of pieces of rock, in which

linen tunic striped with purple, tucked up to the knee; but you see only your shadow in this discouraging solitude, and you hear no other sound than the distant bells of a flock doomed to browse on the scanty blades of grass which here and there appear between the stones.

In this Sahara, in the midst of one of the few copses which



A HAWKING PARTY.

chilly and confined spot may be observed the white flower of the buck-wheat. Here and there, enormous hollow blocks, twenty or thirty feet long, remind you what people formerly inhabited this desert. It seems to you as if the blood of human victims still flows in the recesses of these dismal ruins; the mind, impressed with a sense of involuntary terror, recalls the form of the Druid, with the crown of oak-leaves on his forehead and his

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overshadow the hills, washed by the Dordogne, between Rocamadour and Grama, you would have heard, towards the middle of June in the year 1156, the most joyous flourish which the trumpeter's skill of that period could produce. The Viscountess of Ventadour had come to visit the Lord of Montvalent, her cousin, and was hawking with her numerous train of cavaliers and retainers. Fowling being at that time the favourite amusement of

the nobility, was particularly in favour with the young lords, who were passionately addicted to it; so that the art of hunting was then considered the most agreeable branch of human knowledge. We can now only judge of the importance in which it was then held by the brisk controversies which daily arose upon the choice of falcons. Henry II., King of England, who loved his horses and dogs more than ever other Christian did, had brought into fashion the falcon of Denmark and Norway; but, either to protest against the dominion of England or from national pride, the barons of the south preferred those of the Alps. Indeed, if we are to believe the best authority of the age, Deudes of Prades, the author of "*Les Oiseaux Chasseurs*," the King of England was right. The worthy canon of Maguelonne, in his poem, which was to be found in every castle, speaks thus:

"Il est trois sortes de faucons,
Les autours, les émerillons;
Puis un petit de bonne race;
Ainsi la nature les classe.
Le danois l'emporte sur tous;
Il est plus gros, plus vif, plus doux;
Les yeux il a clairs et luisants,
Les ongles crochus et tranchants."

Now we cannot inform our readers whether the bird which had just been loosed in the woods, by the edge of the water, on the day of which we are speaking, was from Norway or from the Alps; but it flew so as to deserve the praises of its mistress, the beautiful lady of Ventadour, who, absorbed in the chase, stood upright in her stirrup, looking anxiously towards the sky; whilst two huntsmen, leading hounds in leash, kept at some distance behind her; and a little old man, whose game-pouch announced his profession, mounted on a small horse from the moors, prepared a lure in his left hand, whilst to his right the impatient chargers of some barons, whose eyes sparkling with pleasure followed the chase, stood pawing the ground.

The noble bird shot vigorously upwards; for some time it continued to mount with the same rapidity, then it was seen to stop, balance itself, and remain like a motionless point in the air, steadily observing its prey. By degrees, however, he blockaded it, that is to say, he got to windward of it, and, having gained this advantage, he commenced a hot pursuit.

It was a partridge, which, not being a match in swiftness with this cruel adversary, tried to escape him by precipitating herself into a cluster of bushes. But here a new danger awaited her; the hounds, which had been loosed on seeing her fall, plunged after her, and as if it were not enough to frighten her with their sharp and plaintive barks, the old man with the game-pouch hastened to dismount and to beat the bushes noisily with his stick.

In spite of the pleasure which every noble lady took in the chase, the Viscountess of Ventadour did not behold, without a certain emotion, the ever increasing peril of the unfortunate bird, and her desperate position. The dogs uttered yelpings of joy in the thicket, the old falconer plunged his stick into it with a sort of sinister delight; and, as pitiless as his master, the falcon, hovering above, with eager eyes and trembling claws, waited till they had forced his prey to quit its asylum. And the dilemma of the poor bird, which, paralysed with terror, did not dare to move, and could only escape from the man and the dogs to find death ten yards higher, under the claws of the hawk, was indeed a piteous sight.

The lady was quite distressed, and, calling to the servant with the green game-pouch:

"Let her escape! I do not wish it to be killed, you know that I do not wish it."

"Madame?" said the falconer, as though he had not heard.

"Leave that partridge and reclaim the falcon!"

The vassal pretended to obey, but he was so long in seeking his lure, that the hounds got at the partridge and dislodged her. Choosing the slowest of two deaths, she darted away like an arrow; unhappily the falcon, warned by the cries of the old falconer, had perceived her. Vain was her rapid flight, the pursuit was still more eager, and after having for some time wheeled about in the air, she fell wounded by the attack of the falcon in a neighbouring glade.

Flushed with emotion, the viscountess urged forward her steed so rapidly, that she was in time to witness a singular scene. Some vassals, seated upon the ground, were partaking of their frugal morning meal, and seemed to be encouraging by their cries a child, about ten years of age, who was seen through the bushes. This child, who was very beautiful, and whose eyes flashed with anger, had picked up the partridge, wounded and half-dead, and holding it with one hand against his breast, with the other he repelled the falcon, eager for its prey, which was flying around him, in order to seize it.

At the sight of the viscountess the vassals arose hurriedly; the falconer arrived to recall and hood the hawk; and the cavaliers, appearing from the wood, asked the fair lady what interested her so deeply. For answer, she pointed to the child, who still proudly held the partridge, as though he wished to dispute it with his lord. The first action of the viscount was to call him in his rough and commanding tone, which froze the vassals with fright; but upon a sign from his lady, he courteously gave place to her, and reined in his horse.

Adelaide of Ventadour deserved this deference. Daughter of the rich William VI., Lord of Montpellier, she had brought as a dowry to her husband, Ebles III., a hundred marks of silver, beautiful clothes, a stock of fine linen, two silver cups weighing six marks, and the Arab palfrey which she rode with so much grace. Indeed, in order to raise her to the seigneurial grandeur of the domain of Ventadour, Ebles had divorced his first wife, Margaret of Turenne, whose distant relationship to him afforded a plea for considering their union illegal, as soon as he became acquainted with Adelaide. Still under the charm of recent marriage, he listened to his lady, as the young clerks of Dalon did to the white-bearded monk who taught them chanting; all her wishes were laws, and her desires were granted almost as soon as expressed. Therefore she interrupted the viscount, whom she thought too severe; and beckoning to the child to approach:

"Wilt thou give me thy partridge for this piece of gold?" said she in a gentle voice.

"No!" replied the child boldly.

"Why?"

"Because you will let the falcon kill it."

"And if I leave it thee, wilt thou come with me?"

"No!"

"Thou wilt not follow me?"

"No; you are wicked—you made my godmother weep."

"Who is thy godmother?"

"Madame Marguerite!"

Here the viscount interrupted, and, urging forward his horse in spite of the entreaties of his lady, he demanded roughly of the vassals, whom he recognised as belonging to him, who had given them permission to leave his domain. They replied with the boldness of people protected by a superior power; for in spite of its iron law, feudalism, the brutal expression of physical force, flinched before the church, the emblem of spiritual power; they replied that they were returning from a pilgrimage to Rocamadour, to thank the saint for having heard their prayers the preceding year. The viscount now only wished to know the name of the father of the child, who had already so far made friends with the lady as to bring her the bleeding bird without being alarmed at the impatient movements of the palfrey. When her husband again came to her side, the first words which she said to him were these:

"Ebles, may I ask a favour of you?"

"Yes, lady, and if it be possible, consider it as granted."

"Do you know to whom that child belongs?"

"To a servant named Bernard, who heats the ovens at the castle."

"Do you know what I wish if he has a large family?—to keep this young boy and bring him up as my son, until God gives me a child of my own."

"Let your wish be mine!" said Ebles, bowing graciously towards the viscountess.

Young Bernard accordingly received, at the Castle of Ventadour, the brilliant education given to the sons of the nobility of the time. An old monk of the Abbey of Dalon taught him to

speak Latin grammatically, to reason, think, overthrow arguments, to sophisticate adroitly, and discomfit his adversary by eloquence, and to ornament his conversation by rhetoric. He moreover imparted to him the knowledge of the science of numbers, the four major and the four minor tones of music, and rendered him so learned that when he had reached the age of sixteen, with a robe of fine cloth and a purse at his side, he prized the pen a hundred times more than the purse, and became a troubadour.

From that time, joining to his name that of the estate of the viscount, Bernard lived gaily through the latter half of the twelfth century, honoured by the great, cherished by the towns-people, esteemed by the ladies, and popular from the Loire to the Pyrenees by the charming songs which he composed wherever he went. As in this iron age (and it is worthy of remark) wit and talent excelled, Bernard of Ventadour was celebrated during forty years; his triumphs and his gaiety only ended with the century.

An event as singular as that which began his career marked the close of it.

Forty years later, Bernard, his hair blanched with age, was looking at some tapestry, upon which Alice, Duchess of Normandy, had traced, with great truthfulness and extraordinary

vivacity of colour, the hawking of Rocamadour. On beholding this scene of his native country he breathed these lines :—

“ Quan la douss' aura venta
Devès nostrè pais,
Mès veiaire qu'ieu senta
Odoz de paradis. . . . ”

“ Whene'er the breeze goes murmuring by,
The breeze that in my country sighs,
I vow it wafteth unto me
The rich perfume of Paradise.”

At this moment an equerry entered the apartment, bringing two letters.

One was for the Duchess Alice, and announced to her that Richard Cœur-de-Lion, to whom she had long been betrothed, was about to marry a Princess of Castile.

The other, sealed with black, informed Bernard of the death of his faithful friend, the valiant Count of Toulouse.

Both were struck with a terrible blow, and took the same resolution; Alice covered that forehead, despoiled of the crown, with the veil of Fontervault; and Bernard, bidding a final adieu to the world, knocked at the door of the Abbey of Dalon, the port and refuge of all the vanity and wretchedness of the age.

BAHIA, THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF BRAZIL.

THE ancient capital of Brazil, officially called San Salvador da Bahia de Todos os Santos, but more generally known by the simple name of Bahia, possesses a magnificent harbour, of which some idea may be formed from the accompanying engraving (p. 325). This harbour, which gives much commercial importance to the town, has long been the admiration of mariners, and the skilful French hydrographer, whose book is now an authority in part of South America, does not hesitate to place it among the first of the numerous ports of which he gives so clear and exact a description. “All Saints' Bay,” says he, “taking it in its full extent, forms a very deep gulf in the continent; this gulf, which is known by the name of *Reconcaro*, is nearly thirty miles in circuit, and receives the waters of several rivers, some of which are considerable.

“The largest fleets would be safe in Bahia, for in many situations vessels would find good anchorage secure from all gales, whilst the fertility of the surrounding country would insure them all necessary supplies.

“On the eastern side of the principal entrance, where the ground rises in an amphitheatre from the shore, is situated the town of San Salvador, which possesses some fine buildings; it stands on uneven ground intersected by gardens, and is divided into the high and low towns. Next to Rio Janeiro, the town of Bahia is the most important in Brazil, and has a population of 100,000. Several forts, built on the summit as well as at the base of the declivity, command the coast and protect the town; the dockyard is defended by the fort Do Mar, a circular fortification built upon a bank of sand two hundred toises from the shore.”

Not only is Bahia an opulent and singularly picturesque town, it is also a city of old traditions, strange memories, and even poetic legends. Brazil had only been discovered three years, when, according to several trustworthy authors, whose chronology, however, is questionable, the entrance of the bay was explored for the first time by Christovam Jaques, who there erected one of those sculptured stone pillars which were then called *Padrões*, and which marked the progress of the navigators along the uncultivated shores. Seven or eight years later, about 1510 or 1511, the numerous tribes of the Tupinamba Indians, who wandered on the fertile coasts of Itaparica or Tapagipe, had had time to forget the passing of the European ship, when a vessel trading in dye-woods was stranded upon the shore of the pleasant district which now bears the name of Victoria. It is said that the shipwrecked mariners all perished, devoured by the savages, with the exception of a brave Gallician, who maintained so much

sang-froid in the midst of peril, and displayed so much dexterity among the Indians, as to save his life and earn for himself the privileges of a chief. Arriving in the presence of the Tupinambas, who received him clamorously and with menacing gestures, Alvares Correa, seizing a stray arquebuse which the waves had cast up among other remains of the wreck, loaded it, aimed at a bird, which he killed, and the report of fire-arms resounded for the first time on these shores. Henceforward the young European bore the name of a dreaded animal; he was called Caramourou; in memory of the mysterious power of which he had just given proof. The tribe of Indians, struck with terror, surrendered to him; the daughter of a chief, the beautiful Paraguassou, voluntarily united her fate to his: he ruled where he thought to have perished. Tired of a life among the Indians, but faithful to his young companion, Correa left Brazil accompanied by her, and embarked in a Norman ship commanded by Captain Duplessis. But here the legend, decking itself in the most brilliant colours, and warming with the most varied incident, belies all chronology. Welcomed on the banks of the Seine by Catherine de Medici, who had been recently united to Henry II., Paraguassou, so the story runs, received baptism in an old chapel at Paris, and took the name of the young queen who acted as her godmother. Sated with the marvels of Europe, she soon left France with Alvares Correa to return to her country, where she established herself in her native village, bringing with her the fruitful germs of Christianity, and subsequently the conquerors owed to her the legal surrender of the magnificent territory upon which the city now stands.

This legend, which is in the mouth of every Brazilian, and which has even given rise to a national poem, receives no support from chronology; and the Brazilians, who now really make deep researches as to their origin, take good care to defend it, and content themselves with their own explanations. They divide the marvellous events into two parts, and attribute them to two Europeans cast on their shores about the same time; it is thus that they elicit the truth of the story.

They assert that Alvares Correa, united to Paraguassou, was the primitive founder of the city, but do not allow that he went to France; he received the first *donotario*, *Pereiro Coutinho*, and even shared his misfortunes; but later, in 1549, when the noble Thomé de Souza was on the eve of laying the foundations of a regular town in the midst of these warlike tribes, he became the most active agent of colonisation; he acted as *lingua*, that is to say, interpreter, charged with direct-